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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

The Anti-Semites Are Right: the Jews Do Run the World

“In the beginning...” (1:1)

Our rabbis teach, “*Lev Melachim v’sarim b’yad Hashem.*” This means, “The hearts of kings and ministers are in the Hand of Hashem.” When it comes to international affairs, anything that impinges on the future of the world, even the most important leaders have no freedom of choice. They become puppets.

And who pulls the strings of those puppets. We do. The Jewish People.

The very first word in the Torah is “Bereishis.” The Midrash expounds ‘Bereishis’ to read as ‘*Bishvil* Reishis’ – ‘Because of Reishis.’ One of the things the Gemara calls ‘Reishis’ is the Jewish People. Meaning that the world was created in the merit of the Jewish People.

Hashem set up this world in such a way that our every action, for the good or the not-so-good, ascends through all the spiritual worlds above to the highest possible places. It makes its effect there and then the power of that action descends back down through all those worlds to this, the lowest world, becoming a physical reality. For example, when someone keeps Shabbos in Bristol or in Ramsgate or in Timbuktu, that spiritual energy ascends all the way to the control room of the universe and is sent back down as massive positive energy. A typhoon in the China Sea is cancelled, abundant rain falls in Niger, averting a famine.

The Gemara says, “Pnei Hador, k’pnei hakelev.” This means that the face of the generation just before Mashiach is like the face of a dog.

Let’s pretend you were a visiting Martian, unfamiliar with Earth creatures and you saw a man and dog out for a walk. You would think that the dog was leading the man because he’s out

in front. But the dog is constantly looking over its shoulder, finding out which way it should go. The leaders of this world are not in charge. We are. Don't look at the news to find out what the polls say, what the pundits say.

The real news is being created by you. How did you treat your wife this morning? How did you treat your mother? How did you pray? Were you careful about what went into your mouth and were you just a careful about what type of words came out?

The anti-Semites of this world are right: the Jews do run the world. But not in the way they think. It's not the puppets of politics who are the movers and shakers of this world. You are.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

KIDDUSH LEVANAH (PART 13)

UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON

“My walk on the moon lasted three days. My walk with G-d will last forever.”
(Charles Duke – Lunar Module Pilot, Apollo 16)

Kiddush Levanah continues with the following passage from Shir HaShirim (2:8-9): The voice of my beloved – behold! It came suddenly, leaping over mountains, skipping over hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Behold! He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.

What is the connection of these two beautiful, lyrical verses from Shir HaShirim to Kiddush Levanah? According to the Yalkut Shimoni, a Midrashic work comprised mostly of Aggadic teachings, these verses are alluding to the Mashiach's arrival. “The voice of my beloved” is the announcement that we all crave to hear, that the Mashiach has finally arrived. Despite all the spiritual hurdles, the mountains and the hills that are strewn in his way, the Mashiach will leap over them effortlessly as he heralds in the Final Redemption. As Rashi describes it: the Final Redemption will emerge so rapidly that the Mashiach will seem like a gazelle that is nimbly and gracefully rushing towards us.

Shlomo HaMelech, in Shir HaShirim, then continues with some of the most inspirational and uplifting words ever written: “Behold! He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.” Shlomo HaMelech describes to us how Hashem has always been with us at every moment throughout our history. Even in the bleakest of times, Hashem is watching over us and ensuring that the beautiful light His chosen nation brings into the world will never be extinguished.

Shlomo HaMelech uses three different descriptions to portray Hashem's presence: a wall, a window and latticework. Each one is describing Hashem's love for us in a different way. The

Yalkut Shimoni understands “our wall” to be referring to the Kotel Hama’aravi (Western Wall) because the Shechinah (Divine Presence) never departed from the Western Wall. (Shemot Rabbah 2:2) So too, we find in the Zohar HaKadosh (Mishpatim 116) that the Shechinah rests on the Western Wall. It is true that it is not possible to see through a wall, but that does not preclude our state of certainty that Hashem is truly there. The windows are a reference to the windows of the Batei Kenesiyot (Synagogues) and the Batei Midrashiyot (study halls). Hashem watches how we gather together to pray to Him and to learn His holy Torah. Perhaps, it is possible to also understand the windows as referring to the windows of our hearts. Hashem looks into the deepest recesses of our hearts to find the sparks of greatness and holiness within us. The Midrash then goes on to explain that the latticework is a reference to the way that the Kohanim (priests) configure their fingers when they bless us. Birkat Kohanim (Priestly Blessing) is the ultimate gift from Hashem to us, as it is the source of our blessings in this world.

I once heard an additional explanation from my Rebbe as to why Shlomo HaMelech uses the allegory of latticework to describe our relationship with Hashem. When the latticework is very closely threaded together, it is not possible to see what is on the other side unless one is very close to the openings. Even when we behave in a way that pulls us away from Hashem, and stops us from being able to see Him clearly, Hashem, with His infinite love for us, is always as close to us as can be. As Shlomo HaMelech so poignantly describes, Hashem is “peering through the openings.” He sees us clearly. We, on the other hand, by not choosing to do as our Father in Heaven demands of us, distance ourselves from the latticework and lose our clarity of Who is waiting for us on the other side.

In the insightful but somewhat unsettling words of Rabbi Avigdor Miller, “We were not born winners; we were not born losers; we were born choosers.”

To be continued...

SPECIAL FEATURE

5785 – The Rarest Year of Them All

Part I

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

As we entered into the *Yamim Noraim* of a new year, with the “*Charvos Barzel*” (‘Iron Swords’) and “*Chitzei Tzafon*” (‘Northern Arrows’) war in Eretz Yisrael unfortunately still raging, aside from us *davening* for the safe return of the hostages and *Refuah Sheleimah* for all of the wounded, we surely are continually *davening* for the Gemara’s aphorism of “*Tichleh Shana U’Klaloseha*, May the year and its curses end,” and its addendum, “*Tachel Shana*

U'Birchoseha,” May the New Year and its blessings be ushered in,” to rapidly come true. But truthfully, our New Year is not just a standard new year.

Indeed, the year we just entered, 5785, is not only a rare one, but calendarically speaking, actually the hands-down **rarest** of them all. You see, this year is classified as a *HaSh”A* year in our calendars. This abbreviation is referring to Rosh Hashanah falling out on Thursday (*hei*), both months of Cheshvan and Kislev being *shalem* (*shin* - 30 day months instead of possibly 29; these are the only months that can switch off in our set calendar), and Pesach falling out on Sunday (*aleph*).

A *HaSh”A* year is the rarest of years, and out of the 14 possibilities in *Tur*'s 247-year calendar cycle, this year type occurs on average only once in about 30.19 years (approximately 3.3 percent of the time). Indeed, at times there are 71 years (!) in between *HaSh”A* years. The last time this year type occurred was 31 years ago in 5754 / 1994. The next time will be 20 years hence in 5805 / 2044. The next several times after that are slated to be 27 years further, in 5832 / 2071 and then a 51 year gap in 5883 / 2122.

The reasons and rules governing the whys and whens this transpires are too complicated for this discussion; suffice to say that when the *Mishnah Berurah* discusses these issues he writes “*ain kan makom l’ha’arich*,” that this is not the place to expound in detail, which is certainly good enough for this author.

Obviously, such a rare calendar year will contain many rare occurrences. This series sets out to detail many of them. Perhaps as we get nearer to the actual events, we will discuss them in greater detail.

Three Tishrei Three-Day Yom Tovs

The first remarkability of this year that many, especially those of us in *Chutz La’aretz* will notice, is that all of the Tishrei-based *Yomim Tovim* are “Three-Day Yom Tovs” (with the exception of Yom Kippur – which also has a change from the norm; it falls out on Shabbos this year, supplanting Shabbos entirely due to it being considered “*Shabbos Shabbason*”). This moniker is referring to when Yom Tov either is immediately preceded by Shabbos [which will occur this year with Pesach; more on that later in the series], or will conclude with Shabbos’ entrance.

In Tishrei alone, as Rosh Hashanah commenced on a Thursday, so will Sukkos, a fortnight further, as will Shemini Atzeres, a week later. As Rosh Hashanah is always observed as two-day Yom Tov worldwide – this means that even in Eretz Yisrael, our year, 5785, started off with a Three Day Tov. In *Chutz La’aretz*, there are actually four (!) “Three Day Yom Tovs” observed this year – Three in Tishrei, and the beginning of Pesach as well. That fact alone should make us sit up and take notice as to this year’s exceptionality.

***Eruv Tavshilin* (3 X)**

Along with Three Day Yovs ending in Shabbos comes along an important institution – that of *Eruv Tavshilin*. Anytime *Yom Tov* falls on Friday, an *Eruv Tavshilin* must be made on erev *Yom Tov* to permit cooking and other preparations on *Yom Tov* for *Shabbos*. Although cooking is permitted on *Yom Tov*, one may only prepare food for consumption on

that *Yom Tov*. There is, however, one exceptional situation — one may cook on a Friday *Yom Tov* for *Shabbos*, but only if one makes an *Eruv Tavshillin* the day before *Yom Tov*.

Truthfully, making an *Eruv Tavshilin* is much more common in *Chutz La'aretz* than it is in Eretz Yisrael. Since, in our calendar devised by Hillel II the beginning of *Sukkos*, *Pesach*, and *Shmini Atzeres* never falls on Friday, the only time there is a need for an *Eruv Tavshilin* in Eretz Yisroel is when *Shavuos* or the seventh day of *Pesach* falls on Friday, or, like this year, when Rosh Hashanah fell out on Thursday. On the other hand, in *Chutz La'aretz*, in addition to these instances, often the two days of *Yom Tov* fall on Thursday and Friday. Hence, practically speaking, one *Eruv Tavshilin* is performed this year in Eretz Yisrael, whereas in *Chutz La'aretz* three are necessary – in Tishrei alone.

Our fascinating journey detailing the many remarkable facets of our rare year will IY”H be continued. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch famously wrote that “the Jew’s catechism is his calendar.” It is this author’s wish that by showcasing the uniqueness of our calendar year and its rare *minhagim*, this series will help raise appreciation of them and our fascinating calendrical customs.

**This author wishes to thank Rabbi Yosef Yehuda Weber, author of ‘Understanding the Jewish Calendar,’ for being a fount of calendrical knowledge and for his assistance with this series.*

**To read the full version of this article, please visit us online at: https://ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/*

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Q & A – Succot

Questions

1. According to the Torah, what three basic requirements define a material as valid for use as a succa roof?
2. If the succa causes discomfort (e.g., it's too cold) to the extent that under similar conditions you would leave your very own house, you are exempt from the mitzvah. Why?
3. What two things are forbidden to do outside of the succa all seven days of the festival?
4. What is the absolute minimum number of meals a person is required to eat in the succa during the seven day holiday?
5. Besides referring to the tree and its fruit, what does the word "esrog" mean literally?
6. What is the minimum length of a lulav?
7. What is the maximum percentage a person is required to add to the purchase price of his esrog in order to obtain an esrog of greater beauty?
8. On the Shabbos that occurs during Succos, we read the Book of Koheles, in which King Solomon refers to himself as "Koheles." Why is King Solomon called Koheles?
9. What prohibition could a person transgress simply by sitting in the succa on the eighth day of Succos?
10. We hold a tallis over the heads of the people who read the end of the Torah and the beginning of the Torah. Why?

Answers

1. It must grow from the ground, no longer be connected to the ground, and not be receptive to tumah (ritual defilement).
2. Because the commandment of living in a succa is to dwell in the succa for seven days the same way you dwell in your house the rest of the year. (Mishna Berura 640:13)
3. Eat (an 'established' meal) or sleep. (Orach Chaim 639:2)
4. One. Eating a meal in the succa the first night of Succos is a requirement. The rest of the festival, a person can eat 'snacks' which are not required to be eaten in a succa. (Outside Israel, one must eat a meal the second night of Succos as well. However, there is no requirement to live outside Israel!) (Orach Chaim 639:3)
5. Beauty. (Ramban Vayikra 23:40)
6. Its spine must be at least 4 tefachim (halachic handbreadths).
7. 33.3% (Orach Chaim 656:1)
8. Because he gathered (kihale) vast wisdom, and because he, as king, gathered the nation on Succos after the Sabbatical year. (Rashi, Koheles 1:1)

9. Bal Tosif - "Do not add to the mitzvos." The commandment to live in the succa applies for only seven days. To sit in the succa on the eighth day with intent to fulfill the mitzvah transgresses "bal tosif." (Orach Chaim 666:1)
10. It represents the wedding canopy, symbolizing that through the Torah we wed ourselves to Hashem.

Q & A – Bereishet

Questions

1. Why does the Torah start with the account of Creation
2. What happened to the light that was created on the first day?
3. Why isn't the word "good" associated with the second day?
4. How were the trees supposed to taste?
5. On which day were the sun and moon created?.
6. Hashem blessed the birds to be fruitful and to multiply. Why did He not do so with the beasts?
7. In whose likeness was man fashioned?
8. What kind of food did Adam eat?
9. Why is "the sixth day" written with the definite article?.
10. At the end of the sixth day what was the world still lacking?
11. Why was man made from dust gathered from the entire earth?
12. How is man superior to the animals?
13. Why was it not good that man be alone?
14. Where do we learn that one must not add to a commandment from Hashem?
15. What does it mean that Adam and Chava "knew that they were naked"?
16. Why did Hevel choose to be a shepherd?
17. What was the marital practice of the generation who lived before the flood?
18. What did Tuval-Cain invent?
19. Why did Chanoch die at a young age?
20. What was the sign that Shem was born with great propensity for righteousness?

Answers

1. 1:1 - So that when the nations accuse us of stealing Eretz Canaan from the Canaanites, we can respond that Hashem, as Creator, has the right to give the land to whomever He sees fit, and He gave Eretz Canaan to us.
2. 1:4 - Hashem saw that the wicked would be unworthy of it so He hid it for the righteous.
3. 1:7 - Because the work with the water wasn't completed until the third day. Anything that is incomplete is not "good."
4. 1:11 - The wood was to have the taste of the fruit.
5. 1:14 - They were created on the first day and suspended in the firmament on the fourth day.
6. 1:22 - He did not want the serpent, who was to be cursed, to receive a blessing.
7. 1:26 - In the likeness of the angels.
8. 1:30 - Vegetation.
9. 1:31 "The" in Hebrew is the letter hey, which has a numerical value of five. Hashem created the world on the condition that it will endure only if the Jewish People accept the Five Books of the Torah.
- 10.2:2 - Rest.
- 11.2:7 - So that wherever he might die, the earth would receive his body.
- 12.2:7 - He was given understanding and speech.
- 13.2:18 - If he were alone, he would appear to be a god. The creation of woman emphasized man's dependence.
- 14.3:3 - From Chava. Hashem commanded not to eat from the tree but she added not to touch it. Because she added to the command she eventually came to transgress it.
15. 3:7 - They had been given one commandment and they had stripped themselves of it.
- 16.: 4:2 - Since the ground had been cursed he refrained from cultivating it.
- 17.: 4:19 - They married two wives, one with whom to have children. The other one was given a potion which prevented her from bearing children.
18. 4:22 - Murder weapons.
- 19.5:22 - Though he was righteous, he was easily influenced; therefore Hashem took him before his time to protect him from sinning.
20. 5:32 - He was born already circumcised.

Q & A - Noach

Questions

1. Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
2. Why did Hashem tell Noach to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
3. The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
4. What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
5. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the flood for seven days?
6. Why did the first water of the flood come down as light rain?
7. : What did people say that threatened Noach, and what did Hashem do to protect him?
8. What grouping of creatures escaped the punishment of the flood?
9. How deeply was the ark submerged in the water?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. : When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
14. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
15. Why does the command to "be fruitful and multiply" directly follow the prohibition of murder?
16. : Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
17. : Why did Noach curse Canaan specifically? Give two reasons.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called Yiscah?

Answers

1. 6:13 - Robbery.
2. 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, "Hashem is bringing a flood," it might encourage some people to repent.
3. 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse.
4. 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. "Kosher" and "non-kosher" are Torah concepts.

5. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Metushelach.
6. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
7. : 7:13,15 - People said, "If we see him going into the ark, we'll smash it!" Hashem surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:4 - Eleven amot.
- 10.8:11 - Nothing. It was a leaf, not a branch. (The olive leaf symbolized that its better to eat food "bitter like an olive" but which comes directly from Hashem, rather than sweet food provided by humans.)
- 11.8:14 - A full solar year.
- 12.8:14 - Eleven days.
- 13.: 9:3 - After the flood.
- 14.9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
- 15.9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
- 16.9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
- 17.9:22,24 - Because Canaan is the one who revealed Noach's disgrace to Cham. And because Cham stopped Noach from fathering a fourth son. Thus, Noach cursed Cham's fourth son, Canaan.
- 18.10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, persuading them to rebel against Hashem.
- 19.11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
- 20.: 11:29 - The word "Yiscah" is related to the Hebrew word "to see." Sarah was called Yiscah because she could "see" the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Shake & Quake (Final Part)

One of the last prophecies recorded in the Book of Isaiah opens with the words “Listen to the word of Hashem, O those who quaker [*chareidim*] to His word” (Isa. 66:5). In that prophecy, Isaiah foretells how in the Final Redemption, only those truly devoted to Hashem will experience happiness, while the duplicitous haters “will dry up.” In contemporary times, the term *chareidi* is often applied to a significantly large segment of the Orthodox community who are considered especially devoted to Hashem and Torah observance. In this essay we continue our exploration of terms related to “shaking/shuddering in fear,” by discussing the term *chareid* and the related terms, *rogez*, *ra'ash*, *ga'ash*.

The term *chareid* derives from the trilateral root CHET-REISH-DALET, which appears fifty-four times in the Bible (according to Even-Shoshan's concordance), plus twice more in the placename Charadah (Num. 33:24–25). One famous example of its occurrences includes when Isaac realized that he had given the birthright blessings to the wrong, and he became afraid, very afraid — *vayechedad... charadah gedolah ad meod* (Gen. 27:33). Similarly, the inflection *vayechedad* appears again when describing the Revelation at Sinai when both the Jewish Nation trembled (Ex. 19:16) and the mountain itself trembled (Ex. 19:18), as discussed earlier in Part 2 of this essay. Another famous appearance of this term is when Boaz was “shaken” (*vayechedad*) by the presence of a woman lying at his feet in the middle of the night (Ruth 3:8).

But that are more Hebrew terms for “shaking in fear,” and there is one particular verse which uses three of those terms in one sentence. In a metaphoric description of the dreaded effects of Hashem's anger, King David writes: “and the land shakes [*vatigash*] and quakes [*vatirash*], and the foundations of mountains shake [*yirgazu*]... when there is anger for Him” (II Sam. 22:8, Ps. 18:8). In this verse, we encounter the words *ga'ash*, *ra'ash*, and *rogez*.

Malbim, as cited by Sefer *Carmel*, understands that this verse as referring to different forms of “shaking” in ascending order. This leads him to explaining that *ga'ash* refers to a more subtle movement than *ra'ash*, while the more intense term *ra'ash* refers to yet a less intense shaking than *rogez*. Although Malbim understood *rogez* as denoting something more intense than *ra'ash*, Rabbi Reuven Landau (circa. 1800-1883) in *Degel Machaneh Reuven* (§61) writes just the opposite, i.e. that *ra'ash* denotes a more intense agitation/stirring than does

rogez. Either way, both *rogez* and *ra'ash* appear together in the expanded *tachanun* prayer recited on Mondays and Thursdays, wherein we ask Hashem to save us from "*ra'ash* and *rogez*." The verbiage of that prayer is likely based on a verse in Job (39:24), which places *ra'ash* and *rogez* side-by-side.

Shadal (to Gen 45:24, Ex. 15:14) clarifies that *rogez* primarily refers to physically “shaking” or “trembling,” but the term is then metaphorically applied to any sort of emotional agitation or disturbance, even if not from fear. For example, one of the curses said to befall those who do not observe the Torah was said to be a *lev ragaz* (Deut. 28:65), which literally means "a trembling heart," but refers here to fear-induced anxiety.

As Rashbam (to Gen. 45:24) already notes, the term *rogez* in Biblical Aramaic has a slightly different connotation, as it is used specifically to denote “anger” or “wrath.” In fact, in rabbinic parlance, a *ragzan* refers to a “person who is prone to anger” (*Shabbat* 156a, *Kiddushin* 40b). In that sense *rogez* also appears in many different prayers, as we beseech Hashem, *b'rogez racheim tizkor*, which literally means "in anger, remember mercy." This verbiage actually comes from a Biblical passage (Hab. 3:2). It should be noted that the Yiddish word *broiges/broygez* (“upset” or “angry”) originates from the Hebrew word *b'rogez*, meaning "in anger" or "with fury." This connection highlights how Yiddish, a language heavily influenced by Hebrew, adopted and adapted the Hebrew term to express a similar emotional state, but only reflects one of the meanings of *rogez*.

Likewise, Rabbi Avraham Bedersi in *Chotam Tochnit*, when discussing synonyms for “anger,” clarifies that even though in some instances *rogez* refers to “angered,” it is not always associated with “anger” since it sometimes refer to “shaking” out of *fear* rather than out of *anger*.

As mentioned earlier, another Biblical Hebrew term that refers “shaking out of fear” is the word *ra'ash*, derived from the triliteral root REISH-AYIN-SHIN. Although that word and its various inflections do not appear in the Pentateuch, they do appear close to fifty times in the rest of the Bible.

Case in point: The Prophet Yechezkel says: "And a wind carried, and I heard behind myself a great *ra'ash* voice [saying]: 'Blessed be Hashem's honor from His place'" (Ezek. 3:12). Targum Jonathan and the Midrash (*Devarim Rabbah* §11:10) explain the word *ra'ash* as *zayah*. In fact, this verse in Ezekiel and the accompanying Targum are immortalized in our liturgy in the *U'va L'Tzion* prayer.

Truth be told, the word *ra'ash* does not just refer to “shaking out of fear,” but can also refer to any sort of vigorous movement. This is why, for example, the earthquake that occurred

during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, is referred to by the prophets as “the *ra’ash*” (Amos 1:1, Zech. 14:5). Likewise, in the prayer *U’Netanah Tokef* recited on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, one of the ways in which people might die is *b’ra’ash*, which likewise seemingly refers to a deadly earthquake.

Another meaning of the Biblical Hebrew word *ra’ash* is “loud noise,” which is how the word is typically used nowadays in Modern Hebrew. The connection between noise and movement can be explained using the scientific knowledge of our day that teaches that audible sound travels from one place to another via sound waves that are essentially just patterns of vibrating air. So essentially all sound/noise is really just movement/vibration being perceived by our ears.

Another term for “shaking in fear” or otherwise volatile movement is *ga’ash*. This word derives from the root GIMMEL-AYIN-SHIN, which appears nine times in the Bible (Jer. 5:22, 25:16, 46:7–8, Iyov 34:20, II Sam. 22:8, Ps. 18:8). In Modern Hebrew, the word *ga’ash* is used in the phrase *harei ga’ash* and refers to “volcanoes,” but literally means “tumultuous mountain.” Of course, volcanoes are known for their erratic behavior and their tendencies to suddenly “blow their top.” Needless to say, earthquakes and volcanoes are closely connected as both result from tectonic activity beneath the Earth's surface. Earthquakes often occur near volcanoes due to the movement of magma, which can cause shifts in the Earth's crust, leading to seismic activity. By the way, the term *har ga’ash* actually derives from a Biblical place-name, which is mentioned as being south of Joshua’s burial place (Joshua 24:30, Judges 2:9, see also II Sam. 23:30, I Chron. 11:32).

Although the three-letter roots of both *ra’ash* and *ga’ash* conclude with the AYIN-SHIN letter string, I have not found any sources that argue that the initial REISH and initial GIMMEL of those respective roots could somehow be interchangeable. What I did find is that the Malbim in his work *Yair Ohr* in Hebrew synonyms writes that *ga’ash* denotes a little bit of extra movement, while *ra’ash* denotes even more movement than that, which is in line with the Malbim’s explanation as cited in *Sefer HaCarmel*.

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Succot and the Clouds of Glory

“Dwell in succot for seven days... in order that your generations will know that I placed the Jewish People in succot when I took them out from Egypt....” (Lev. 23:43-44)

On our *daf* we learn in a *beraita* what these “*succot*” actually were. Rabbi Eliezer says they were the *ananei kavod* – the clouds of glory. Rabbi Akiva, however, teaches that they were actually real *succah* booths for living in whenever they made camp in the desert.

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch explains that the verses instruct us to dwell in *succot* nowadays, as throughout history, to remind us how Hashem “placed us in *succot*” and protected us in the desert with clouds of glory or in *succah* dwellings. The Shulchan Aruch rules like Rabbi Eliezer, and the Mishna Berurah adds that whenever we nowadays are dwelling in the *succah*, we should be careful to have in mind that Hashem took us out from Egypt and protected us from the desert sun and heat with the miracle of the *ananei kavod* that surrounded the Jewish People in the desert. (*Orach Chaim* 625:1:1)

▪ ***Succah 11b***

I Am Here

Hillel the Elder used to say, “If I am here, everyone is here; but if I am not here, who is here?”

A *beraita* on our *daf* relates that this is what the great Sage would say when he rejoiced in the Beit Hamikdash during the *Simchat beit hasho'eva* celebrations during Succot.

Rashi writes that although Hillel was speaking in the first person – “*ani*” which translates as “I” – he was actually speaking in the name of G-d. His message was that if the Jewish People are righteous then G-d’s Divine Presence will dwell in the Beit Hamikdash and everyone will come there. But if they transgress, G-d will remove His Divine Presence from there and no one will come (Rashi).

Commentaries ask why Hillel referred to G-d as “I”. A great rabbi in Jerusalem taught me that on Succot the *simcha* of mitzvah that followed the days of judgment, purity and atonement of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur help a person truly recognize that a “piece of Divineness” is inside him. Succot is the only time of the year when we say in prayer “I” but are referring to “Him” — as we learned above in our *masechta* that we pray, “*Ani v’Hu hoshia na*”, which is a plea for G-d to save us (45a).

▪ *Succah 43a*

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

“Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance.” (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

SUKKOS

Mitzvah #324-5 (*Vayikra 23:29-43*)

Sukkos occurs at the time of year when farmers gather in most of the year’s crops. It is natural for a farmer to attribute the year’s turnover to his hard work and shrewd innovations, and therefore to celebrate this time of year as a milestone of personal achievement. A farmer is liable to feel that he did not need Hashem in the past nor does he need Him in the future. Not only does such a celebration lead a person toward arrogance, self-worship, and sin, but it is also limited to the temporal confines of this world. One cannot celebrate over more than what he possesses, and even this he cannot enjoy if his neighbor possesses more. In Hashem’s kindness, He commanded us with a series of mitzvos that guide us to focus our celebration during this time of the year around Him. In this way, the celebration has only a positive effect and the joy is so much greater, as shall be explained.

The beauty of the Four Species arouses joy in the hearts of all who behold them (*Sefer Hachinuch*). We stand before Hashem and take these species at hand as representatives of the year’s produce, thus attributing our successes in the past year to Hashem and rejoicing over His kindness. Gratitude to Hashem always goes hand in hand with increased dedication toward His service, as it is only fitting that we use the bounty that He has granted us for His sake (*Chovos HaLevavos*). Therefore, we take the Four Species, which symbolize body parts that we are now dedicating to Hashem's service. The Esrog represents the heart, the Lulav represents the spine and the nervous system, the Hadasim represent the eyes, and the Aravos

represent the mouth. It is especially appropriate to dedicate ourselves to His service now, after Yom Kippur, when Hashem has atoned for our sins and granted us new life.

We are commanded to dwell in sukkos during the festival of Sukkos, in remembrance of how Hashem protected us from the sun in His Clouds of Glory as He led us out of Egypt. The *schach* must be made specifically from ground-grown material so that it resembles a cloud, which forms from vapor that rises from the ground (*Sukkah* 11b and *Shulchan Aruch* §625). One might wonder: Hashem could have commanded us to symbolize the Clouds of Glory in another way, such as by making the *schach* out of fluffy white materials. Why did He focus on the seemingly minor detail that the Clouds of Glory rise from the ground? We may suggest that we use grown-grown material to symbolize the Clouds of Glory so that we will take to heart that all of our hard-earned "ground-grown" accomplishments materialize only with Hashem's help and for the sake of His glory.

Let us appreciate the significance of the original Clouds of Glory that surrounded us in the Wilderness, and then we will apply it to the sukkah. A cloud is the most temporary of shelters and a wilderness is the most bereft of shelter. We seek to recall that element of the Exodus every year as we sit in the sukkah. Though we are no longer in the wilderness and have homes of our own, we remind ourselves once a year that the shelter that this world provides is as temporary as a cloud in the wilderness. Our only reliance, therefore, is upon Hashem, Who sheltered us in the Wilderness and continues to shelter us throughout history. It is imperative that we do so now, at the time that we gather in and appreciate the past year's accomplishments, when we are liable to view our possessions as our permanent acquisitions and to think that we can trust in ourselves.

Another idea we see regarding the original Clouds of Glory is that there was nothing other than Hashem in the Wilderness. We literally lived with Him, for His presence rested visibly in the Mishkan in the center of our encampment and we witnessed His miracles on a daily basis. Just like the Jewish people had no earthly pursuits in the Wilderness, and were therefore able to engage solely in spiritual pursuits, so too, once we realize that this world has no intrinsic and lasting worth, we can serve Hashem wholeheartedly. We sit in the sukkah for seven days, corresponding to the seven decades in a standard lifespan (*Abarbanel*), to bring attention to the fact that our lives in this world are limited, and that the only way to make them last forever is by filling them with mitzvos that connect us to the Eternal.z

On a deeper level of understanding, dwelling in a sukkah is not only a reminder of how Hashem protected us in His Clouds of Glory following the Exodus; it is also a miniature manifestation of that event. Every year during Sukkos, following the restoration of our relationship with Hashem on Yom Kippur, we live together with Hashem in the sukkah in a state of married bliss. The Kabbalists teach that "the two walls and a handbreadth" of a sukkah represent Hashem's upper arm, forearm, and hand, encircling us in a Divine embrace.

PARSHA OVERVIEWS

Bereishet

In the beginning, Hashem creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. This process of creation continues for six days. On the seventh day, Hashem rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbat, which returns to us every seven days. Adam and Chava — the human pair — are placed in the Garden of Eden. Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," and in turn gives the fruit to Adam. By absorbing "sin" into themselves, Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished. Death and hard work (both physical and spiritual) now enter the world, together with pain in childbirth. Now begins the struggle to correct the sin of Adam and Chava, which will be the subject of the history of the world.

Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava, bring offerings to Hashem. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives inferior produce and his offering is rejected. In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel, and is condemned to wander the earth. The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of Noach. After the death of Sheit, mankind descends into evil, and Hashem decides that He will blot out man in a flood which will deluge the world. However, one person, Noach, finds favor with Hashem.

Noach

It is now ten generations since the creation of the first man. Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and Hashem resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the world. Hashem instructs Noach to build an ark in which to escape the flood. After forty days and nights, the flood covers the entire earth, including the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days the water begins to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, this ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends forth a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later, Noach again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After seven more days, Noach once again sends forth the dove, which this time does not return. Hashem tells Noach and his family to leave the ark. Noach brings offerings to Hashem from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose. Hashem vows never again to flood the entire world and gives the rainbow as a sign of this covenant.

Noach and his descendants are now permitted to eat meat, unlike Adam. Hashem commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibitions against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder and eating the meat of a living animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system. The world's climate is established as we know it today.

Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noach's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yefet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended.

The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Bavel, which results in Hashem fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Torah portion concludes with the genealogy from Noach to Avram.

The Ohr Somayach family wishes our students, alumni, friends and all of Klal Yisrael a meaningful and fruitful New Year holiday season.

May you and your families be written and sealed in the Book of Life, enjoy a festive Succot, and be blessed from Above with much good health, happiness and success in the coming year – and for many more years to come.